

sub  
E

354. (New) The method of Claim 353, wherein the package contains legally required information.

355. (New) The method of Claim 353, wherein the quantity of free oxygen, including oxygen that may be derived from the reduction of oxymyoglobin in meat in the sealed package, does not exceed 1,500 ppm.

356. (New) The method of Claim 353, wherein the bacteria-reducing agent includes a measured amount of water, wherein the measured water replaces water evaporated from the meat.

357. (New) The method of Claim 353, wherein the package is a chub package.

358. (New) The method of Claim 353, wherein the package is a case-ready modified-atmosphere package.

359. (New) The method of Claim 353, wherein the bacteria is *E. coli*.

B 1  
360. (New) A method for processing meat primals, comprising:

obtaining meat primals having at least fat and water;

reducing the bacteria on the meat primals;

transferring the meat primals to containers;

removing oxygen from the containers;

sealing the containers;

storing the containers;

removing the primals from the containers and cutting the primals to provide

primal portions;

placing the primal portions into barrier packages;

introducing a gas into the package;

sealing the packages; and

testing the meat for the presence of bacteria.

361. (New) The method of Claim 360, wherein the packages contain legally required information.

LAW OFFICES OF  
CHRISTENSEN O'CONNOR JOHNSON KINDNESS<sup>LLC</sup>  
1420 Fifth Avenue  
Suite 2800  
Seattle, Washington 98101  
206.682.8100

Sub  
362. (New) The method of Claim 360, wherein the gas has oxygen in proportions higher than the proportion of oxygen in air.

363. (New) The method of Claim 360, wherein the gas has oxygen in proportions lower than the proportion of oxygen in air.

364. (New) The method of Claim 360, wherein the bacteria is *E. coli*.

365. (New) The method of Claim 360, wherein testing is done in the package.

B 1  
366. (New) A method for producing ground meat, comprising:  
grinding meat to provide ground meat;  
exposing ground meat to a gas that inhibits bacterial growth;  
transferring the ground meat to a web of barrier material;  
sealing the web to enclose the ground meat in an atmosphere having an oxygen level lower than the oxygen level of air;  
testing the ground meat for the presence of bacteria; and  
applying indicia to the web, wherein the indicia includes information related to the ground meat.

367. (New) The method of Claim 366, wherein the meat is ground in a gas having an oxygen content lower than the oxygen content of air, and the quantity of oxygen in the sealed web is not more than 500 ppm.

368. (New) The method of Claim 366, wherein the bacteria is *E. coli*.

369. (New) A method for producing a meat product, comprising:  
harvesting meat composed of several components having a variable relative ratio, including at least fat, muscle, and water, wherein the ratio of at least one component is determined;  
treating the meat with an agent including water that inhibits the growth of bacteria;  
grouping the meat into quantities according to at least one variable component;  
combining quantities of meat according to at least one of the variable components to provide a meat product with a combined quantity of at least one variable;

LAW OFFICES OF  
CHRISTENSEN O'CONNOR JOHNSON KINDNESS<sup>LLC</sup>  
1420 Fifth Avenue  
Suite 2800  
Seattle, Washington 98101  
206.682.8100

Sub  
C  
C  
meat product;  
determining the proportion of water in the meat product;  
enclosing the meat product within a packaging material to provide a packaged  
meat product;  
testing the meat for the presence of bacteria; and  
applying information to the package, including legally required information  
relating to the packaged meat product.

370. (New) The method of Claim 369, wherein the agent is acidic.

371. (New) The method of Claim 369, wherein the agent comprises carbonic acid.

372. (New) The method of Claim 369, wherein the package provides recesses to  
contain liquids that may escape from the meat.

373. (New) The method of Claim 369, wherein the bacteria is *E. coli*.

B1  
374. (New) A method for producing a goods stream, comprising:  
transferring a first stream of goods having at least one variable to a first device  
capable of measuring at least one variable;  
transferring a second stream of goods having at least one variable to a second  
device capable of measuring at least one variable; and  
combining the first and second streams into a goods stream, wherein combining  
takes place in the presence of a gas that has an oxygen content different from the oxygen content  
of air.

375. (New) The method of Claim 374, wherein the streams are maintained in a  
substantially enclosed environment.

376. (New) The method of Claim 374, wherein transferring the first and second  
streams occurs simultaneously.

377. (New) The method of Claim 374, further comprising diverting the combined  
single stream to one of a plurality of vessels.

378. (New) The method of Claim 374, wherein a variable in the combined stream is  
determined by varying the flow rate of at least one of the first and the second streams.

LAW OFFICES OF  
CHRISTENSEN O'CONNOR JOHNSON KINDNESS<sup>LLC</sup>  
1420 Fifth Avenue  
Suite 2800  
Seattle, Washington 98101  
206.682.8100

379. (New) The method of Claim 374, wherein the variable of the combined stream is controlled by decreasing the flow rate of at least one of the first and the second streams.

380. (New) The method of Claim 374, wherein the variable is selected from the group consisting of fat, lean tissue, and water content of the goods.

381. (New) The method of Claim 374, further comprising grinding the goods of the first and the second streams before combining.

382. (New) The method of Claim 381, further comprising applying a bacteria-reducing agent to the goods prior to grinding.

383. (New) The method of Claim 382, wherein the agent comprises an acid.

384. (New) The method of Claim 383, wherein the acid is selected from the group consisting of citric acid, acetic acid, lactic acid, and carbonic acid.

385. (New) The method of Claim 382, wherein the agent comprises ozone in water.

B1 386. (New) The method of Claim 374, further comprising treating the first and second streams with radiation.

387. (New) The method of Claim 386, wherein the radiation is selected from the group consisting of E beam, x-ray, gamma, and ultraviolet C.

388. (New) The method of Claim 381, further comprising exposing the first and the second streams to a gas, that has an oxygen content different from the oxygen content of air, during grinding.

389. (New) The method of Claim 388, wherein the gas comprises carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitrogen, oxygen, or any combination thereof.

390. (New) The method of Claim 374, further comprising exposing the first and second streams to a gas that has an oxygen content different from the oxygen content of air.

LAW OFFICES OF  
CHRISTENSEN O'CONNOR JOHNSON KINDNESS<sup>PC</sup>  
1420 Fifth Avenue  
Suite 2800  
Seattle, Washington 98101  
206.682.8100

391. (New) The method of Claim 381, further comprising exposing the first and second streams to a gas, that has an oxygen content different from the oxygen content of air, prior to grinding.

392. (New) The method of Claim 381, further comprising mixing the goods of the first and second streams after grinding and before measuring.

393. (New) The method of Claim 392, further comprising exposing the first and second streams to a gas that has an oxygen content different from the oxygen content of air during mixing.

394. (New) The method of Claim 393, wherein the gas is carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitrogen, oxygen, or any combination thereof.

395. (New) The method of Claim 374, further comprising enclosing the first and the second streams in a vessel upstream of the measuring device.

396. (New) The method of Claim 395, further comprising controlling a gas that has an oxygen content different from the oxygen content of air in the vessel.

397. (New) The method of Claim 396, wherein the gas comprises carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitrogen, oxygen, or any combination thereof.

398. (New) The method of Claim 374, further comprising exposing the goods to a gas that has an oxygen content different from the oxygen content of air, during blending.

399. (New) The method of Claim 398, further comprising adding water to the goods, in an amount not exceeding an amount of water that has evaporated from the goods, during treatment of the goods.

400. (New) The method of Claim 398, wherein the gas comprises carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitrogen, oxygen, or any combination thereof.

401. (New) The method of Claim 374, further comprising grinding the combined goods stream.

LAW OFFICES OF  
CHRISTENSEN O'CONNOR JOHNSON KINDNESS  
1420 Fifth Avenue  
Suite 2800  
Seattle, Washington 98101  
206.682.8100

402. (New) The method of Claim 401, further comprising exposing the combined goods stream to a gas, that has an oxygen content different from the oxygen content of air, during grinding.

403. (New) The method of Claim 402, wherein the gas comprises carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitrogen, oxygen, or any combination thereof.

404. (New) The method of Claim 374, wherein the first stream comprises a plurality of two or more goods streams.

405. (New) The method of Claim 404, further comprising treating the plurality of streams to reduce bacteria that may be present.

406. (New) The method of Claim 374, wherein the second stream comprises a plurality of two or more goods streams.

407. (New) The method of Claim 406, further comprising treating the plurality of streams to reduce bacteria that may be present.

408. (New) The method of Claim 374, wherein the first stream has a lower proportion of at least one variable in comparison with a higher proportion of the same variable in the second stream.

409. (New) The method of Claim 408, further comprising combining the first and second streams to produce a combined stream, having a combined variable proportion that is between the low proportion of the first stream and the high proportion of the second stream.

410. (New) The method of Claim 374, further comprising producing a plurality of combined streams from the first and the second goods streams.

411. (New) The method of Claim 410, further comprising determining a variable of each of the plurality of combined streams, by controlling the flow rates of the first and second streams.

412. (New) The method of Claim 374, wherein the combined stream is transferred to a controlled-atmosphere packaging system.

LAW OFFICES OF  
CHRISTENSEN O'CONNOR JOHNSON KINDNESS<sup>PLLC</sup>  
1420 Fifth Avenue  
Suite 2800  
Seattle, Washington 98101  
206.682.8100

413. (New) The method of Claim 374, wherein the transferring of the first and the second streams is carried out by pumps that compensate for surge.

414. (New) The method of Claim 374, further comprising applying a bacteria-reducing agent to the goods before combining.

415. (New) The method of Claim 414, wherein the agent comprises an acid.

416. (New) The method of Claim 415, wherein the acid is selected from the group consisting of citric acid, acetic acid, lactic acid, and carbonic acid.

417. (New) The method of Claim 414, wherein the agent comprises ozone in water.

B 1 418. (New) The method of Claim 374, further comprising packaging the combined goods stream in a chub package.

419. (New) The method of Claim 374, further comprising portioning the combined stream.

420. (New) The method of Claim 419, further comprising portioning the combined stream into patties.

421. (New) The method of Claim 374, wherein combining the streams is at a pressure greater than ambient pressure.

LAW OFFICES OF  
CHRISTENSEN O'CONNOR JOHNSON KINDNESS<sup>TM</sup>  
1420 Fifth Avenue  
Suite 2800  
Seattle, Washington 98101  
206.682.8100